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Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Summary record of the 11th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 23 June 2008, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Natalegawa ..... (Indonesia)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

1. *The agenda was adopted.*

Question of New Caledonia (A/AC.109/2008/9 and A/AC.109/2008/L.13)

2. **The Chairman** drew attention to the working paper on New Caledonia prepared by the Secretariat (A/AC.109/2008/9).

Draft resolution A/AC.109/2008/L.13

3. **Mr. Aisi** (Papua New Guinea) introduced the draft resolution.

4. *Draft resolution A/AC.109/2008/L.13 was adopted.*

Question of Tokelau (A/AC.109/2008/1 and A/AC.109/2008/L.15)

5. **The Chairman** drew attention to the working paper on Tokelau prepared by the Secretariat (A/AC.109/2008/1).

Hearing of representatives of the Non-Self-Governing Territory

6. *At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Tuia (Ulu-o-Tokelau) and Mr. Payton (Administrator of Tokelau) took places at the Committee table.*

7. **Mr. Tuia** (Ulu-o-Tokelau), titular head of the Territory, said that Tokelau remained fully committed to achieving self-government, despite the fact that the referendums had not garnered the necessary support. Following the October 2007 referendum, the General Fono had agreed that a period of reflection was necessary.

8. The Government of Tokelau — with the assistance and support of New Zealand's administering Power — was currently directing resources towards priority areas it had identified. New Zealand had already committed NZ$ 43.1 to boost Tokelau's infrastructure and capacity development needs over a three-year cycle (2007/2008-2009/2010); that amount represented an increase of approximately $15 million over the previous cycle. Around $4.1 million was earmarked for Tokelau's infrastructure development project, which included the building of ship-to-shore infrastructure and an administration building for one of the villages. Much progress had been achieved with regard to the establishment of a reliable shipping service for Tokelau.

9. The Tokelau International Trust Fund, which looked to provide for the long-term needs of the population, currently boasted some $35 million. Although the Fund had been established according to a dollar-for-dollar arrangement between Tokelau and the Government of New Zealand, the latter had given above and beyond that agreed in the original arrangement. Australia and the United Kingdom had also contributed to the Fund.

10. Tokelau was extremely vulnerable to the effects of climate change; accordingly, it was working on an ambitious energy policy that would allow the small atolls to operate on 100 per cent renewable energy. Finally, he appealed to the Committee to consider climate change as an important development concern with regard to Tokelau and to convey that concern to the General Assembly at its sixty-third session.

11. **Mr. Vunibobo** (Fiji) thanked New Zealand for its exemplary cooperation with the Special Committee and with Tokelau and commended the chiefs and people of Tokelau, the General Fono and the Taupulega (village councils) for their own perseverance.

12. Although there was a tendency in the international community to dismiss traditional institutions, there was in fact enormous scope for strengthening such institutions in terms of governance. Fiji supported Tokelau in its future endeavours and called on the international community to increase its support of the Tokelau International Trust Fund.

13. **Mr. Payton** (Administrator of Tokelau) reaffirmed New Zealand's continuing commitment to Tokelau, its people and its development adding that New Zealand had accepted the decision of Tokelau's leaders and General Fono to shift their attention from future referendums to the improvement of basic services and infrastructure on the atolls. A wide-ranging major infrastructure renewal programme was well under way, and included the renovation of schools. Increased efforts were being directed at strengthening the ability of Tokelau's public service to support the needs of the population more comprehensively.

14. It was essential to acknowledge the open and committed manner in which the people of Tokelau had exercised their right to self-determination and to respect the outcome of that act. New Zealand was committed to supporting Tokelau in the years to come and helping it to find appropriate solutions.

15. *Mr. Tuia (Ulu-o-Tokelau) and Mr. Payton (Administrator of Tokelau) withdrew.*

Draft resolution A/AC.109/2008/L.15

16. **The Chairman** drew attention to an error in the subheading and pointed out that it should be amended to read "Fiji and Papua New Guinea: draft resolution".

17. **Mr. Aisi** (Papua New Guinea), speaking also on behalf of Fiji, introduced the draft resolution and pointed out that, in paragraph 16, that the word "subsequent" should be inserted before the word "decision". He called on the Special Committee to continue to support Tokelau and New Zealand in their joint endeavours.

18. *Draft resolution A/AC.109/2008/L.15, as orally amended, was adopted.*

Organization of work

19. **The Chairman** said he took it that in order to facilitate the timely submission of the report of the Special Committee to the sixty-third session of the General Assembly, and in accordance with established practice, the Committee should authorize the Rapporteur to submit the report directly to the Assembly.

20. *It was so decided.*

Other matters

21. **Mr. Okio** (Congo) said that he had been following the Committee's work for six years and had listened to many statements outlining the pain and despair of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, their expectations of the Committee and the United Nations and sometimes their disappointment. He stressed that the Special Committee must work hard, during the final years of the current Decade, to fulfil its mandate and to assist the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories to exercise their right to self-determination.

22. **Ms. Joseph** (Saint Lucia) recalled that during the current session the Committee had heard a number of criticisms over the lack of implementation of the decolonization mandate. Unless those criticisms were taken fully into account, the very future of the decolonization process would be in jeopardy.

23. The Plan of Implementation of the Decolonization Mandate (A/60/853-E/2006/75) which her delegation had submitted in 2006 had thus far had gone largely ignored. Similarly, development of case-by-case plans for each Territory had not as yet been initiated. It had become clear that significant progress would not be made unless innovative measures were introduced. It was therefore time for the Committee to regroup along the lines that the General Assembly had suggested.

Closure of the session

24. **The Chairman**, in a closing statement, expressed his appreciation for the support extended to him and the interest shown in the work of the Special Committee and noted that, given that only two and a half years remained of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, the Committee must focus on tangible results and take into account the constructive feedback provided by stakeholders.

25. The main conclusion of the current session was that the Special Committee must find new, proactive ways of going about its work, through improved cooperation with the administering Powers and in full recognition of the aspirations and interests of the peoples and Governments of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, on a case-by-case basis.

The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.